THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) According to information received from scientific departments, no Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

2258. withdrawn

Circulation of fake currency notes

2259. SHRI MOTILAL VORA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of persons apprehended alongwith fake currency during the last two years and the amount of these notes recovered from them;

(b) whether the notes include the fake currency notes sent from Pakistan;

(c) the concrete steps being taken by Government in this direction after having failed to check the circulation of fake currency notes despite various efforts; and

(d) what punishment is given to the persons involved in printing and circulation of fake currency notes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) A total number of 1230 persons were arrested and Fake Indian Currency Notes (FICN) of the value of about Rs. 2.79 crores were seized during the year 2003. During 2004*, the number of person arrested was 1157 while the value of FICN was of the order of about Rs. 4.06 crores.

(b) Some of the reported seizures indicate that FICN are smuggled into the country from across the border.

(c) A number of steps have been taken to curb circulation of FICN in the country which include stepping up of vigilance by BSF/Custom authorities to prevent smuggling of fake notes into the country, training and sensitization of law enforcement agencies, dissemination of information on security features through print and electronic media for the benefit of general public etc. Further, some additional security features have been approved for incorporation in the Indian bank notes which shall make counter feiting a difficult task. In addition, Government of India has nominated CBI as the nodal agency to monitor investigation of fake currency notes cases and in tackling such crimes.

*Figures are provisional and upto September, 2004

(d) Action as per provisions contained in the Indian Penal Code (IPC) is taken against the persons involved in printing and circulation of fake currency notes.

Provision of computer facility of Panchayats

†2260. SHRI P.K. MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering to provide computer operated by car battery to every Panchayat with a view to connect the same with Information Technology;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the details of plan Central Government are having to fulfil the requirement of power therefor?

THE MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) No Sir.

(b) and (c) In the seventh Round Table of Ministers in charge of Panchayati Raj held at Jaipur, it was recommended that States should consider specifying a framework for common standard for hardware and put in place a system for transparent procurements through competitive bidding. Funds for acquisition of hardware could be dovetailed from various sources and could include:

(i) Infrastructure funds available in multilaterally funded projects,

(ii) own incomes of Panchayats,

(iii) Funds recommended by the Finance Commission for the creation and maintenance of Databases,

(iv) Funds sourced from a fund to be created and managed by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj,

(v) MP and MLA Local Area Development Funds,

(vi) Purchases based on systems of annuity based purchases.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.